

Commercial Building  
(Esther Morris' Hat Shop)  
Northwest corner of Grant and Price Streets  
South Pass City  
Fremont County  
Wyoming

HABS No. WYO-41

HABS  
WYO,  
7-SOPAC,  
14-

PHOTOGRAPHS  
WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA  
REDUCED COPIES OF MEASURED DRAWINGS

Historic American Buildings Survey  
Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation  
National Park Service  
Department of the Interior  
Washington, D. C. 20005

COMMERCIAL BUILDING  
(ESTHER MORRIS' HAT SHOP)HABS  
WYO,  
7-SOPAC,  
14-

Location: Corner of Grant and Price Streets, South Pass City,  
Fremont County, Wyoming.  
Universal Transverse Mercator Coordinates: (USGS South  
Pass City Quadrangle Map) 12.680740.4703820.

Present Owner: The state of Wyoming owns the building, but not the land.

Present Use: Preserved as an historic building by Wyoming Recreation  
Commission.

Statement of  
Significance: This is an example of the type of commercial building  
found in mining towns at the turn of the century.

PART I. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

## A. Physical History:

1. Date of erection: ca. 1890.
2. Architect: The original structure built on this site was probably designed by John Swingle. This seems likely because he advertised himself as a contractor in the South Pass News and was active in the construction of the Sweetwater County jail. The builder of the present structure is unknown.
3. Original and subsequent owners: Legal description of property: Lots 103, 101, and 99, corner of Grant and Price Streets, South Pass City, Fremont County, Wyoming.

(Note: For further information on land ownership in South Pass City see the HABS Report on South Pass City, WYO-27.) This ca. 1890 structure was preceded by an earlier one, the Miner's Exchange Saloon erected ca. 1868. The owner of the saloon was John Swingle, who sold the building on June 27, 1868 to his brother, Jacob Swingle, for \$500. During the late 1870's and early 1880's there were several fires in South Pass City. There is speculation that the saloon burned down in one of these fires and the present Commercial Building was subsequently erected in its place. An archeological team from the University of Wyoming confirms that there was a previous foundation on this site. In the 1890's, the Commercial Building was used as a hat shop run by two doctor's daughters; and later was used as a private home. The building was bought by Fred Stratton in 1948 and sold in 1955 to Mr. and Mrs. John Woodring along with other buildings in the town. In turn, the Woodrings sold the town to the Wyoming 75th Anniversary Commission, Inc. in 1966. The 1969 Wyoming legisla-

COMMERCIAL BUILDING  
(ESTHER MORRIS' HAT SHOP)  
HABS No. WYO-41 (Page 2)

ture turned over operation and maintenance of South Pass City to the Wyoming Recreation Commission. Although the Wyoming Recreation Commission owns the building, the land is owned by Mr. G. B. Colemere, the President of the Pioneer Carissa Gold Mine, Inc.

4. Alterations and additions: Modifications on the inside of this building took place as the use of the building changed.

B. Historical Events and Persons Connected with the Structure:

This was one of the oldest and longest operating saloons in South Pass City. Although at one time, it was believed to be Esther Morris' Hat Shop, there is no evidence that Mrs. Morris, the moving spirit behind the Woman's Suffrage movement in Wyoming, ever ran a hat shop in South Pass City.

C. Sources of Information:

1. Old views: Photographic file, Wyoming Recreation Commission, Cheyenne, Wyoming.

2. Bibliography:

- a. Primary and unpublished sources:

Carter County, Records of Carter County, "Deed Book A,"  
Dakota Territory. Western History Research Center,  
Coe Library, Laramie, Wyoming.

Carter County, Records of the County Commissioners of  
Carter County, Sweetwater County Courthouse, Green  
River, Wyoming.

Files on South Pass City, Wyoming Recreation Commission;  
Cheyenne, Wyoming.

Shaffer, Thomas, planner for the Wyoming Recreation Com-  
mission; interview in Cheyenne, Wyoming on June 19,  
1973.

Prepared by John Paige  
Project Historian  
National Park Service  
Summer 1973

PART II. ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

A. General Statement:

1. Architectural character: This building is a good example of the scale and configuration of a 19th century frontier commercial building.
2. Condition of fabric: Very poor.

B. Description of Exterior:

1. Over-all dimensions: This free-standing one-story structure is approximately 18' x 26'-11". At one time there was an additional room at the rear which was approximately 18' x 10'.
2. Foundations: The east (front) wall has a random rubble red slate shist foundation. The other walls now show no evidence of foundations, but recent excavations around the perimeter of the building as well as erosion prevents the original conditions from being determined.
3. Wall construction, finish and color: The front wall is constructed of rough sawn lumber. The sides and rear wall are constructed of unfinished hand-hewn lodgepole pine logs with mud and wood chinking. The gable on the rear is unfinished rough sawn 1 inch random width boards. The corners of the log walls in the rear have a half-dovetail joint.
4. Structural system, framing: The log walls are load bearing. The framing of the roof is approximately four inch diameter logs spaced at thirty to thirty-six inches on center.
5. Porches: None.
6. Chimneys: There is one chimney adjacent to the wall between the front and rear rooms on the rear room side. It is located approximately five feet from the north wall. This chimney is typical of the chimneys in South Pass City, in that it has a wood support for the masonry up to a height of approximately seven feet.
7. Openings:
  - a. Doorways and doors: There is one doorway (without a door) centered in the front wall. There is another doorway (without a door) located in the rear wall at the north corner. There is a 30" x 13" opening near the floor in the center

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HABS No. WYO-41 (Page 4)

of the rear wall through which logs for the stove were passed.

- b. Windows and shutters: There is a large window opening on each side of the center front entrance. There is no frame in the south (left) opening, but there is a double-hung frame in the north (right) opening. There is a window opening in the south wall near the rear wall.

8. Roof:

- a. Shape, covering: The gable roof has wood shingles on the north slope of the roof and rough sawn exposed sheathing boards on the south slope of the roof.
- b. Dormers, cupolas and towers: There is a false-front of rough sawn boards on the east with a horizontal boxed cornice at the top.

C. Description of Interior:

- 1. Floor plans: This one-story structure was originally divided into a front and a rear room. The front room, was divided into two rooms at a later time. The smaller room was located to the south of the center entrance and the larger room to the north.
- 2. Stairways: None.
- 3. Flooring: Original random width wooden plank floor is gone except for a few remaining boards near the exterior wall on the north.
- 4. Wall and ceiling finish: There are a few remaining fragments of the original finish which was muslin nailed across the interior of the log walls. The muslin was then wallpapered.
- 5. Doorways and doors: There is one doorway (without a door) from the front room into the rear room. There is one doorway (without a door) from the north front room into the south front room.
- 6. Heating: The building was heated by a stove which was served by the single interior chimney. The stove has been removed.

D. Site:

- 1. General setting and orientation: The building faces east and

is located at the northwest corner of Price and Grant Streets south of Willow Creek.

Prepared by J. William Rudd  
Architect  
Project Supervisor  
National Park Service  
Summer, 1973

### PART III. PROJECT INFORMATION

These records were made during the 1973 Wyoming Project undertaken by the Historic American Buildings Survey in cooperation with the Wyoming Recreation Commission. During the project, records were made on twenty-eight (28) individual subjects and six (6) historic areas.

This project was under the general supervision of John Poppeliers, chief of the Historic American Buildings Survey. Project Supervisor was Professor J. William Rudd, Architect, of the University of Cincinnati. Project Historian was John Paige, Oklahoma State University. The measured drawings were prepared by John Uhler, University of California at Berkeley, Architect; and Student Assistant Architects Richard Duflocq, University of Cincinnati, Clayton Fraser, University of Tennessee, and Richard Wyatt, California Polytechnic University at San Luis Obispo. Jack E. Boucher, HABS staff photographer, provided the photographic record. This report was edited for HABS in 1977 by Candace Reed.

ADDENDUM TO:  
GRANT & PRICE STREETS (COMMERCIAL BUILDING)  
(Esther Morris Hat Shop)  
Grant & Price Streets  
South Pass City  
Fremont County  
Wyoming

HABS WY-41  
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